

# **Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID)**

## **STANDARD PRACTICE PAPER ON TEAM INTERPRETING**

### **About Team Interpreting**

Team interpreting is utilization of two or more interpreters functioning as equal members of a team, rotating responsibilities at pre-arranged intervals, and providing support and feedback to each other.

The decision to use a team rather than an individual interpreter generally is based on

- length and/or complexity of the assignment
- unique needs of the persons being served
- dynamics of the setting.

### **The team process**

All team members are constantly active in the team process. They rotate between primary and support roles. Primary roles are directed to the consumers and include tasks such as signing and voicing. Support roles are necessary to enhance the team's performance and include

- monitoring the overall setting
- assuring appropriate and timely transitions
- prompting the primary interpreter.

In team interpreting, interpreters rotate at regular intervals, usually 20 to 30 minutes, while providing continuity in the message transmission. Rotation greatly reduces mental and physical fatigue by allowing a shift of tasks. Continuity is assured as all team members remain present and actively involved, thereby maintaining awareness of the content and context of the information being transmitted.

In some situations, more than one team is required. Factors influencing how many interpreters or teams of interpreters are needed include

- size of the audience
- number of presenters and whether they present individually or as a panel
- whether the audience members are deaf, hearing or mixed
- whether the speakers are deaf, hearing or mixed
- the degree of audience participation
- communication preferences of presenters and audience
- special needs such as tactile, oral, and close visual range interpreting.

To assure quality service delivery, a team will take sufficient time to decide upon the appropriate placement of primary and support interpreters and their respective functions during the assignment. Arrangements for sound system and other equipment or logistical needs should be made in advance.

The Association believes that through team interpreting, presenters, audiences and individuals can receive optimum interpreting services, because interpreters are able to function at their best.

## **Rhode Island Interpreter Policies:**

- Two-hour minimum to be paid.
- If the assignment is cancelled less than 48 hours (2 business days), payment must be made for total hours reserved.
- If the assignment requires less time than reserved, payment must be made for total hours reserved.
- An assignment, 2 hours or more (sometimes less than two hours), will require more than one interpreter ( extenuating circumstances at the professional judgment and discretion of the interpreter according to RID's Code of Ethics). Please refer to Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf's Standard Practice paper and list of situations as the guidelines that might warrant 2 interpreters for an assignment that is less than 2 hours long.
- For Post Secondary Institutions if an on going class is cancelled less than two weeks (10 business days) before the start of assignment, interpreter must be paid a two week severance period.
- In the case a client has not arrived for the assignment, the interpreter is to wait no less than 30 minutes.
- RI Court: Qualified Interpreters only

Legal Approved \* with Specialist Certificate in Legal  
Add \$10.00/Hour

Legal Approved\* without Specialist Certificate in Legal  
Add \$5.00/Hour

\* Please refer to the RI CDHH Sign Language Interpreters Referral Service's Policies and Procedures, Section 3.1, Court Interpreting in RI.

For more information regarding the policies and procedures, please contact Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, (401) 222-1204 (voice), (401) 222-1205 (TTY), (401) 222 -5736 (FAX) or email at [CDHH@CDHH.RI.GOV](mailto:CDHH@CDHH.RI.GOV).

## **Examples of extenuating circumstances that might warrant 2 interpreters for an assignment that is less than 2 hours long:**

- 1) A presentation to a large audience that involves a panel in the front of the room with both deaf and hearing panelists and audience members comprised of both deaf and hearing individuals. This might also be a board meeting with deaf and hearing board members and a mixed audience.
- 2) Deaf blind interpreting, especially tactile usually requires 2 interpreters to switch off at 20-minute intervals to maintain the integrity of the message.
- 3) Highly technical information: e.g. in a rigorous academic discipline such as linguistics where information is highly encoded and requires intense speed and concentration as well as accuracy.
- 4) Trainings workshops and lectures that involve constant talking/signing without normal breaks (as one would see in a casual conversation).. Formal lectures.
- 5) CDI: a deaf language specialist may be needed to work with a hearing interpreter in a variety of specialized settings: courtroom, deaf-blind, with children, deaf consumers from outside the country, non-standard language users, idiosyncratic language users, high visual language users, etc.